



NEW HAVEN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA STRATEGIC PLAN 2024 – 2027

OUR VISION

To inspire, delight, challenge, and connect diverse audiences and communities through the power of live music.

OUR MISSION

The New Haven Symphony Orchestra enriches Connecticut's cultural landscape through exceptional performances and education programs that are accessible to everyone. We inspire deeper audience engagement and meaningful educational collaborations across the region through innovative and relevant programming. Commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging connect the Symphony with the richly diverse communities we serve.

GOAL 1: DELIVER EXCEPTIONAL ORCHESTRAL CONCERTS THAT INSPIRE CONNECTIONS WITH OUR RICHLY DIVERSE COMMUNITIES.

- A.** Produce large symphonic and smaller orchestra performances rooted in our richly diverse communities and orchestral heritage.
 - Continue to craft concerts that respond to community needs with programming that celebrates diverse talents and repertoire.
 - Leverage existing and contemporary media to grow support among all audiences, including next generation audiences and bring broader awareness to the quality of our work.
 - Reinvigorate regional partnerships which allowed for repeat concert performances and strengthen relationships with the current decision makers to provide expanded performance opportunities.
 - Continue the NHSO's legacy of commissioning exciting new voices in partnership with other organizations.

- B.** Engage the region's "geniuses in our midst" including artists from other disciplines to enhance our programs.
 - Explore pathways to financing projects built with community collaboration.
 - Solicit input on potential residency programs (composer and others) and re-launch.
 - Present Musician-led ensembles in community venues to engage a broader audience.

- C.** Honor the diversity of our communities through performances of repertoire that has been historically overlooked.
 - Draw inspiration from New Haven's varied musical traditions to define American music more broadly.

Utilize existing and contemporary media to maximize the impact of these performances.

- D.** Seek input from NHSO Musicians and community members in developing programs.
 - Create a workgroup led by Perry So to generate strategic ideas.
 - Work with existing partnerships to provide expanded performance opportunities for Musicians.
 - Solicit input from people and organizations involved in the Education and Community Engagement programs to gain insights into welcoming these audiences to concerts.
 - Host a conversation with stakeholders on the potential of digital projects. Determine goals, select media, and determine repertoire.

GOAL 2: DEEPEN THE NHSO'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND BELONGING THROUGH EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

- A.** Strengthen NHSO's position as an equitable leader in the regional performing arts community
 - Design each season with one or two deep community residencies inspired by concert programs celebrating specific affinity groups.
 - Devise a strategy to expand the diverse voices involved with DEIB efforts.
 - Welcome partnerships with other organizations in our region committed to community arts education (e.g., Music Haven, Neighborhood Music School, New Haven Public Schools, Yale School of Music).
 - Utilize community spaces (libraries, schools, etc.) to meet new audiences where they are and to foster deeper engagement.

- B.** Craft programs that value the input of all stakeholders.
 - Devise innovative educational presentations that engage listeners' multiple senses, reflect their unique experiences, and allow them to share the stage.
 - Strengthen our existing diverse networks and engage new communities to better understand how the NHSO can serve their needs.
 - Support community members as they play a leadership role in creating community residencies.
 - Develop an updated vision for Young People's Concerts that addresses the evolving needs of schools.

- C.** Continue efforts to diversify the Symphony onstage and off, in keeping with NHSO's commitment to be an anti-racism, anti-bias organization.
 - Build deeper connections among the Harmony Fellowship alumni and initiate efforts to help them advance in their careers.
 - Create paid opportunities for NHSO Musicians to provide feedback and training to Harmony Fellows and aspiring community musicians.
 - Launch an effort that inspires aspiring community musicians to feel a sense of belonging at NHSO (such as practice auditions, audition feedback opportunities, community events, local housing hosts).

GOAL 3: ENGAGE AND SUPPORT NHSO MUSICIANS, STAFF, BOARD DIRECTORS, AND VOLUNTEERS IN ACHIEVING THE NHSO'S MISSION.

A. Musicians

- Make funding of rehearsal time a budgetary priority.
- Add one professional development session each season based on input from the Orchestra Committee that addresses a topic of special interest to the Musicians, in addition to the existing training on DEIB and Education programming.
- Communicate season plans to Musicians in advance of the June 1 deadline.

B. Staff

- Provide the resources needed to perform at the highest levels and encourage longevity.
- Enhance professional development, cross-train Staff in essential competencies; supplement the annual staff retreat with a second retreat designed for senior Staff.
- When adding new projects to a Staff member's responsibilities, consider discontinuing similarly scaled work that has proven less impactful.

C. Board

- Strengthen the Board's understanding of its role, and its capability to carry out its role successfully.
- Explore opportunities for Board Directors and Musicians to connect.
- Discuss what makes NHSO unique in the orchestral field.

D. Volunteers

- Work with corporate and community partners to attract new volunteers.
- Improve communication with volunteers.
- Improve volunteer training workshops and develop materials for volunteers to reference at home.

E. All Stakeholders

- Provide training for all stakeholders that supports our commitment to Cultural Equity, the Arts for Anti-Racism pledge, and an anti-harassment culture.
- Create and distribute a Code of Conduct.

GOAL 4: STRENGTHEN CAPACITY FOR SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT IN CORE PROGRAMS, NEW INITIATIVES, AND ONGOING OPERATIONS WHILE ADAPTING TO OUR CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT.

- A.** Engage in partnerships with other organizations to maximize our reach and deepen the impact of music on our community.
- Attract strategic partners who could provide resources to support repeat performances of NHSO concerts or programs as well as partners who can make large scale or ambitious programs possible.
 - Share the expertise of NHSO Musicians with performing organizations and schools who train emerging musicians and administrators.
 - Explore both partnerships and innovative formats that would allow emerging professional musicians, music students, and avocational musicians to perform with NHSO Musicians.
- B.** Navigate ongoing venue challenges
- Interface with leadership at primary venues, develop institutional support for NHSO partnerships and earlier schedule confirmations.
 - Look at emerging patterns of venue availability (for both performances and rehearsals), assess changes, and work with partners to develop consistency season-to-season.
 - Continue to grow mutually beneficial partner relationships and improve facilities where possible.
 - Address accessibility issues for the audience and employees.
- C.** Expand our universe of supporters and champions to fund the aspirational goals in this plan.
- Engage with the sizable proportion of our diverse, evolving audience that is new to NHSO in such a way as to encourage future involvement as donors.
 - Discuss annually what portion of reserves should be made available for special projects or strategic investment.
 - Adopt new development strategies as subscriber households decrease, including efforts designed specifically for new listeners.
 - Maintain Board designated stability fund and wisely steward investments.